

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) An aqueous composition comprising (i) a fluorochemical compound and (ii) an ester derivative of an alpha-hydroxy acid, said ester derivative having a melting point of not more than 35°C and a water solubility of not more than 10% by weight at 25°C; wherein said fluorochemical compound comprises a copolymer comprising polymer derived from a polymerization of (a) fluorinated monomer and (b) a non-fluorinated comonomer compound, said fluorinated monomer being selected from the group consisting of:

fluorinated monomer according to the formula R_f-X-E, wherein R_f represents a perfluorinated aliphatic group, X represents an organic linking group and E represents an ethylenically unsaturated group;

fluorinated monomer according to the formula R¹_fX¹-OC(O)-C(R)=CH₂, wherein R¹_f represents a perfluorinated aliphatic group, X¹ is an organic divalent linking group, and R represents hydrogen or a lower alkyl group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms;

and mixtures thereof.

2. (original) An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said ester derivative has a boiling point at 1 atm of at least 150°C.

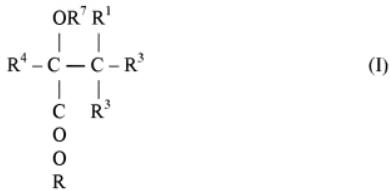
3. (previously presented) An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said fluorochemical compound is comprised in said aqueous composition in an amount of 1 to 30% by weight and said ester derivative in an amount of 0.1 to 20% by weight.

4. (original) An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said ester derivative is an aliphatic ester.

5. (original) An aqueous composition according to claim 4 wherein said ester derivative is an ester of an alpha-hydroxy acid having at least two acid groups and wherein each of the acid groups has been esterified with an alcohol and wherein the total number of carbon atoms in the alcohol derived portion of the ester groups is at least 4.

6. (original) An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein the alpha-hydroxy group of said alpha-hydroxy acid has been esterified.

7. (original) An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said ester derivative corresponds to the formula:



wherein each of R¹, R² and R³ independently represents H, OH, a hydrocarbon group or COOR⁵ with R⁵ representing a hydrocarbon group; R⁴ represents H, a hydrocarbon group or -CH₂-COOR⁶ wherein R⁶ represents a hydrocarbon group; R represents a hydrocarbon group; and R⁷ represents H or an acyl group.

8. (original) An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said ester derivative is selected from the group consisting of citrates, malates and tartarates.

9 – 10. (canceled)

11. (previously presented) An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein the perfluorinated aliphatic group of said fluorinated monomer has 3 or 4 carbon atoms.

12. (withdrawn) Method of treatment comprising contacting a substrate with an aqueous composition of claim 1.

13. (withdrawn) Method according to claim 12 wherein said method further comprises drying the treated substrate at a temperature of not more than 40°C.

14. (withdrawn) Method according to claim 12 wherein said substrate is a fibrous substrate.

15. (withdrawn) Method according to claim 12 wherein said substrate is contacted with said aqueous composition by spraying, wiping, brushing or foaming the composition on the substrate.

16. (withdrawn) Method according to claim 12 wherein said substrate comprises leather or textile.

17. (withdrawn) Spray can comprising an aqueous composition of claim 1.